

California Recreational Trails Committee (DRAFT) Meeting Minutes

January 25, 2005

Sea Crest Resort Motel
2241 Price Street
Pismo Beach, CA

I. Introduction of Committee Members and State Parks staff present

Members present: John Mercurio (chair), Jim Chapman, Jim Hasenauer, Jim Collins, Jeannie Gillen, Dave Koehler. (Absent: Ron Griffin)

State Parks staff present: Ken McKowen (Executive Secretary), Nina Gordon (Chief, Planning Division), Paul Romero (Chief Deputy Director)

II. Minutes Approval from November 2004 meeting.

Member Hasenauer stated that corrections he had sent to Ken McKowen should be incorporated (acknowledged by McKowen).

ACTION: November minutes, with changes, approved unanimously (Member Chapman abstained having been absent for the November 2004 meeting).

Agenda Changes made by Chair John Mercurio

The Montana de Oro trail closure agenda item IV. (b) will be combined with Superintendent Greg Smith's presentation in agenda item V. (a).

III. Reports

a. State Park Director's Report:

Chief Deputy Director Paul Romero provided the report (summarized):

The California Performance Review (CPR) to restructure state government is now before the Little Hoover Commission (LHC). The Commission has 30 days (until February 6, 2005) to respond to the Governor's request. The CPR review proposes abolishing the California Recreational Trails Committee (CRTC), with its duties being transferred to the California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR). Recommendations and public comments should be sent directly to the LHC. Any CPR proposals for restructuring State Parks will be included phase II of the CPR action.

Member Chapman: He has a printout of LHC as related to the CRTC.

Romero continues: DPR budget (05/06 FY), fared well, with some across board cuts and changes in retirement. Lost another \$1.5 million (however, received \$6 million increase in the department's spending cap, allowing for potential increased revenues to augment the lower general fund allocation) Pleased with this smaller cut.

Romero continues: The California Recreation Round Table (which looks at recreational needs and trends in California) will be meeting in Oakland on Feb 3rd, (Thursday) from 9:30 a.m.—3:30p.m. The meeting is open to the public.

Romero continues: Language for the proposed 2006 parks bond (Introduced by Chesbro) is for \$3.1 billion. There is a line item for trails, but with no funding amounts included at this time. It must go through legislative process.

III (b): State Parks Statewide Trails Manager Report

Ken McKowen (Statewide Trails Manager)

(A) Updated the CRTC on the status of draft Trails Policy being developed by State Parks. The draft policy focuses on planning with multi-use trails being a primary consideration, but not required if trail design and safety are an issue. The current draft Policy strongly encourages State Park District superintendents to establish District Trails Advisory Committees.

(B) Updated status of California Trail Days scheduled for April 23-24, 2005. Promotional mailings done and DPR Statewide Trails Office website information updated.

(C) Chair Report

Moved to Chair John Mercurio's Member Report

(D) Member Reports

Dave Koehler Member Report:

The City of Fresno is implementing a tree planting program. They are also working on Fresno's Trails Plan. Additional property has been purchased along the San Joaquin River as an addition to the Parkway.

Jim Collins Member Report:

Thanked everyone for the tremendous turn-out for the meeting. Working to gather biking related information and make contacts with hiking and biking organizations, with a focus in the Northern California coast. Looking forward to working with Jim Chapman, the other Rec Trails Committee member representative from Northern California.

Jeannie Gillen Member Report

Last meeting dealt with multi-use trails and constraints, issues, and possible needed improvements at Malibu Creek. Multi-use isn't much of an issue in Member Gillen's community; it's mostly cow country.

Rode in a parade on Dec 13th honoring the Day of the Horse.

Thank you to Barney and Gloria Northcote (owners of the Sea Crest Resort) for their hospitality for the Rec Trails Committee meeting.

New issues: Commented on the status of the Recreational Trails Committee in view of the governor's efforts to reduce the numbers of state advisory committees and commissions.

There are some issues arising with the rebuilding of the group horse area at Cuyamaca that was partially destroyed by the wildfire. There is need for both help and to reach an agreement. At Anza-Borrego there is a continuing issue with wild horses, with a new group in place to deal with trails around sensitive sites. There is significant concern regarding continued horse access to public lands.

Jim Hasenauer Member Report

Commented on the recent heavy rains and the impacts on trails in the Santa Monica Mountains area. Many trails built in dry washes have been washed away, so when the area dries, the trails will be different. The trail system does change, so there will be much work to do this spring. Budget constraints may cause issues with replacing some trails.

In Congress, Thompson and Boxer's Wilderness Bill—issues remain with existing trails not being accessible to mountain bikers if bill passes as is. IMBA opposes the bill as written. Back Country Horsemen opposes this bill because of trail maintenance issues. Likely bill will not move in this Congress—but could be attached to another bill.

Forest of Nisene Marks issue: The General Plan was approved, but a lawsuit/lawsuit/judgement followed banning bikes from many of the trails. Desires that State Parks will appeal the decision.

Montana de Oro: great park (and great bike riding) and also thanks to Central Coast Concerned Mountain Bikers.

Jim Chapman, Member Report

Last year accepted position on the BLM Resource Advisory Committee to guide policy making on public land. Many opportunities for all recreation. Need to watch change in user pressures as some lands are withdrawn from public use. Should balance wilderness designations with recreational lands. BLM is looking to swap their "Area 51" near Redding. Lake Berryessa is up for redesignation. Also King Range is part of the pending Wilderness Bill HR 222 (Thompson), which has impacts on mountain bike use. All groups must weigh in. Will be working with IMBA and other groups.

Issues with USFS being interested in a multi-use trail around Mt. Lassen using fire roads, which will also generate tourism. But the USFS designated it for motorized trail use, not for non-motorized users.

Caltrans District 2 now meeting with locals in Susanville to put together a sign program for biking that will help identify trailhead locations.

Received appointment to the Lahontan Water Quality Control Board. The Tahoe Basin is part of their area. Deals with any soil disturbance (roads/trails) etc. Regional boards do have some local enforcement responsibilities regarding water quality issues.

E) Subcommittee Reports

Awards Subcommittee by Member John Mercurio:

Awards Program--Committee Discussion: Create an annual Recreational Trails Committee award recognizing an individual active in trails. Award to be signed by Gov. Need to establish an Award Selection Committee. Committee to be comprised of a Statewide Trails Office member; one RTC Committee member, one industry/nonprofit representative and someone from a government agency related to trails, and one at-large member chosen by the RTC. Suggestions included Holly von Houten from Bay Ridge trail, Tony Look, Charlie Willard, Ilsa Burnes, Bill Bliss or past RTC member such as Karen Collins. Once committee is appointed then solicitation will begin. Joint agreement that John Mercurio and Jeannie Gillen will make the choice. Jeannie to be the RTC Awards Committee representative. Nomination information will be on next agenda and added to the website.

User Conflict Subcommittee Report by Members Hasenauer and Gillen:

Gillen reports that she has not heard of horse-bike conflicts in nearby State Parks (Montana de Oro), unlike other areas of California such as Malibu Creek (Tapia Spur). There is an ability to work through issues. The presence of a partnership and coalition—sharing positive aspects of working together. If issues arise, make RTC aware (Hasenauer and Gillen willing to work with them). Member Chapman comments on the value of getting feedback and sharing positive aspects of what is occurring here in SLO. Staff working with community is positive.

Long Distance Trail Subcommittee Report by Member Gillen:

The National De Anza Trail Council meeting will be held in February before council is set to sunset. Dept. of the Interior appointed 22 members for two years to identify and promote the de Anza Trail. A nonprofit will be started to carry on the work.

California Riding and Hiking Trail status: Discussion about identifying the CRHT as an overlay over the many other trails that now exist along the CRHT's original route/corridor.

IV. New Business:

Status of Recreational Trails Committee

Discussion:

Member Chapman comment: Has a printout of the Governor's California Performance Review (CPR) recommendations regarding the RTC. RTC will be eliminated and its function transferred to DPR. Director could convene similar committee. Status should be more clear by April meeting.

Chief Deputy Director Romero comments: The Committee will be abolished, but includes possibility that it in some form will be transferred to State Parks (DPR). The change does not eliminate the function of committee. At staff level, DPR has looked at this; Planning Division Chief Nina Gordon will as point will work on details of continuing the function. It is likely that the Director won't want to recreate what has been abolished, but will manage the function.

Member Hasenauer comments: Philosophically, DPR is not likely to duplicate the same committee, so how does this happen? The RTC has earned recognition that its members are trail users; need people with experience and maturity, so it will be a challenge for the agency to create something that works. Meeting constraints in the past have created issues, but now the RTC is meeting often and moving forward with real work. Should talk more in April; Gordon to talk with the trails community for feedback.

Member Chapman comments: Good to create a descriptive history of RTC; The RTC has been reorganized before, so it's OK for another form of the committee. Need to keep interest in the committee open.

Member Mercurio comment: There is interest in keeping channels of communication open among trails users and managers and continue working.

IV. Local Trail Program Presentation

(A) State Parks, San Luis Obispo Coast Sector Superintendent Greg Smith

presentation: Thanks the RTC for meeting here. Introduced District Superintendent Nick Franco and District Trails Coordinator Juventino Ortiz. Earlier in the day led the RTC members on a tour of trails at Morro Bay and Montana de Oro state parks.

Summary of District trail projects: Lime Kiln SP, Caltrans looking for realignment of Highway 1, appointed planner rather than engineer. New acquisition of Hearst Ranch property at San Simeon; Boardwalk at Moonstone beach. At Sea West Ranch, Dept. of Fish and Game and the Coastal Conservancy purchased the 700 acre coastal ranch and is

now going through a planning process that will include naming, classification, parking and trails. Estero Bluffs, purchased five years ago, some random use and popular with public and 4 miles of roadside access; Morro Strand in Cuyacus and Morro Bay; ADA boardwalk wanted, but project has just been daylighted. Greg Bettencourt and John Krueger are volunteers who are helping district through many issues. Other issues, coastal permitting process adds burdens, including the Coastal Commission and local coastal permitting agencies. Also, county road into park allows many illegal trails wherever pullouts are located, perhaps ROW will be resolved in several years. Also, Coastal Access trails created without DPR knowledge, into preserves etc.

Connectivity: many people want to use parks from different access points. Issues about how to deal with public access.

Member Gillen Comment: Issues in the past year in this area's state parks with regard to plovers and trail closures to equestrians. Valuable place for equestrians to come and we all must work together. Threat of trail loss over snowy plover nesting sites resulted in a trail committee being formed to mitigate. It works. Mitigation should be part of the process to make management work for all. Compliment the local equestrians regarding the \$17,000 donated (plus \$3000) for horse watering system.

Member Chapman comment: Disconcerting how USFS has locked up property—can't do that. Stay out of mindset that it's closed until we figure out a plan. Discussion of the Hazard Trail as related to Horses. Doesn't seem to be a safe plan,

Supt. Smith comment: Explained the planning process they are going through addressing needs of users such as surfers, steep hills etc. Trails signs are being created and trails system GPS'd.

Member Chapman comment: Although it has little to do with trails, he was impressed with the Morro Bay State Park natural history museum. It is a valuable public use asset. END

(B) San Luis Obispo County Parks and Rec Dept. Presentation: Dorothy Jennings. SLO's population is 250,000. 40% in agricultural preserves and 20% cover control. Demand is high for trails along highway corridors because inland is void of public lands for recreation. Long distance trails contentious in 1980s. County trails plan approved in 1991, and included the de Anza and Coastal trails. County now including recreation element in General Plan Website is progressing with maps and the maps are being updated.

Diablo Canyon spent fuel issue mitigation would extend public access to more property. Should include Irish Hill access effort to offset bluff closure by PG&E.

Hearst deal—Acquisition needs to be planned with sensitivity to all users. Trail can be “moved” to less sensitive area as needs arise. No large parking facilities; Coastwalk

moving into more active role. Lydia Francis (Amigos de Anza) has multi-users involved in trails.

County is growing and now is the time to plan for recreation. Existing parks are being over-used. Much networking within the county. Agencies don't work together as well as they should.: section . Now have trail patrols to help with security and illegal use. Some fighting about "historic" use of trails by equestrians vs. motorized users. Some problems with illegal motorized users and enforcement in some areas.

Member Chapman comment: We are trying to make RTC more visible. The Committee's time together hearing from local trail constituencies is extremely valuable.

Great map of biking trails in SLO. Good to identify trailhead access on the map.

Member Hasenhauer comment: For seven years the Recreation Round Table has gathered together land managers (regional/federal etc.) to provide seamless trails. It's great that state parks works with county—need ONE trails system so there is continuity between jurisdictions because users don't care who manages the trails.

Member Gillen comment: This body is more active than in the past; wants you to bring conflicts and concerns to the Committee—if we don't have the answer, we can get one for you.

VII: Old Business:

Member Hasenauer: Aliso Woods report: Background regarding land swap near Laguna Beach; the County tending to soft-pedal the issue. LA Times has had several articles, but county now acknowledging that when a firm proposal is made by private golf course, then public will be brought in. Montage Resort owns 9 hole course adjacent to wilderness and wants to expand the course into the 'wilderness.' Bad precedent to have land protected turned to private use for golf course. Need resolution to write to Sup Wilson, Orange County planning district and to the head of Harbors and Beaches: write letter of concern regarding potential precedent of transferring public open space to private group—full public disclosure.

ACTION: Member Gillen proposes that a letter from the Committee be prepared, with Member Hasenauer drafting the language. Gillen Motion to move ahead with the letter. Chapman 2nds. Vote: Passed unanimous.

VII. Public Comment

Penny Smith: comment: City of Napoma has completed map of trails; completed safety policy so they can't build fences etc. to block pathways. We are courteous and polite and that is working. Suggests that the RTC complete a list of accomplishments (Add to website). They have a great email system and organized to use it for trail support issues.

Kathy Hustace. President of North County Trails Association—State Park System needs an advisory system for trails for effective communications locally and statewide. It's the people's part/trail, not the government. Also, trail along the Salinas River should

be back on the plan that follows the old mission route (there is a Salinas River Trail in the county trail plan all the way to Monterey County). Need more simple recreation, more people outside, not more Game Boys. RE: Equestrians: planners should remember that 87 percent of trail users are women. They feel and are safer horses.

Nancy Conant: Dogs on trail. Former trail user, but hasn't been on trails for 15 years. Much of the local recreation property is owned by State parks and dogs are prohibited. Dog parks aren't the same as dogs on trails. Some trails should be open to dogs on leash, with stiff fines for offenders. Feels safe as a woman when on trail with dog.

Member Gillen comment: This subject should be on table and be addressed

Member Mercurio comment: Agrees that it's a huge issue.

Greg Bettencourt: Comments on recognizing why there aren't user conflicts in the area: most of the people using the trails have done trail work together. Different relationship when you meet other users that you have worked with on the trail before; it makes a positive difference.

Linda Clark: President of the West Coast Rocky Mountain Horse Club and the SLO Open Space Foundation. Member of several other equestrian groups (including IMBA as a horseman). Does much cross training in trail work with different users. They've formed a coalition to deal with bureaucracies that do not always do things right. Pismo general access on state park land (Grand Ave) forced as equestrians to move there as primary entrance when Los Osos Oaks State Reserve access was closed. Results in a danger for equestrians now because of potential for new hotel in Grover Beach. Do not want to lose access in this area.

John Kruger: An equestrian and mountain biker. Members of their organizations Coast Mounted Assistance, put in 3,000 hours per year in maintenance and patrolling. Over 50,000 volunteer hours over history. Working with Supt. Smith is great. Trying to get users from throughout the county involved in volunteer work because they are also using the trails. Thanks to Supts. Franco and Smith for effecting great work together.

Caroline (missed last name—no speaker's card): Lives near de Anza trail as equestrian. Linda Clark didn't mention motorbikes that illegally use the trail, forcing horses to widen trail and putting undulations on the trail tread that horses can't use well.

VIII. Next Meeting

Member comments: Should be two nights, with one full day of touring/workshop. Look at April and Chico for possible date, with Eureka in July.

IX. Meeting Adjourned